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STATE FOR EUR/SE, CA/P, CA/VO, AND CA/L
DHS FOR MARC FREY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/05/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [CVIS](#) [PTER](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: VISA WAIVER: GREEK FM BAKOYANNIS PRESSES FOR
TIMELY MOU TO GET PACKAGE THROUGH PARLIAMENT

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DANIEL SPECKHARD. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[¶1.](#) (C) In separate conversations with Ambassador, FM Bakoyannis and her Chef de Cabinet Ambassador Halistanis pressed for the U.S. response to the Greek comments on the Visa Waiver (VWP) MOU draft from March and closely linked Greek signature and ratification of the HSPD-6 text on terrorist database sharing. In her August 4 telephone call, Bakoyannis said she would seek to get quick parliamentary ratification of the HSPD-6 document during the August summer session (when it is operating with reduced membership) -- but only if she were able to bring the VWP MOU forward at the same time. She explained that the HSPD-6 was not an easy sell to the Greek parliament due to compatibility with privacy laws. But she thought simultaneous consideration of the VWP MOU would sufficiently sweeten the pot to gain HSPD-6 ratification. Moreover, she argued that it would simply be impossible for her to go to parliament twice on VWP issues, once for the HSPD-6 and then again later for the VWP MOU. She was clearly anxious to move on both in August, while there is only a "skeleton crew" of parliamentarians and little public debate.

[¶2.](#) (C) In a July 25 conversation with Ambassador, Halistanis had also asked for an update on the MOU. Halistanis said he was aware the U.S. and Greece were very close to agreement on the text of the HSPD-6 agreement but reiterated that the agreement needed parliamentary approval. Halistanis emphasized the GOG was prepared to send an agreed-upon final text of HSPD-6 before the legislators very soon but wanted the HSPD-6 and MOU to go as a package.

[¶3.](#) (C) COMMENT: In order to secure passage of HSPD-6 -- an important agreement for our national security interests -- we recommend moving to finalize the VWP MOU at the same time. This will secure GOG commitments to data sharing and move the package through the Greek parliament, while still offering opportunities to hold off on implementation of the Visa Waiver Program until the U.S. is ready.
SPECKHARD